International Journal of Education and Language Studies

ISSN: 2791-9323



Luma Ibrahim Al-BARZENJI [1]

ROOTLESSNESS IN ELIZABETH BOWEN'S THE DEATH OF THE HEART, AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S ARROW OF GOD: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ANGLO-IRISH AND AFRICAN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Istanbul/ Türkiye

p. 43-55

Article Information

Article Type: Research Article

This article was checked by

iThenticate No **plagiarism** detected

Article History

Received: 22/10/2020
Accepted: 15 /11/2020
published: 01/12/2020

Abstract:

Postcolonial literature views the British Empire of the nineteenth century as unique in human history and literary products for it provides writers with different subjects that deal with the idea of how to resurrect the colonized identity even after getting liberation.

Postcolonial literature seems to label literature written by people living in countries formerly colonized by other colonized and other colonial powers as British. Such literature and particularly novel, emerged to focus on social, moral, and cultural influences and their interrelation with the impact of English existence upon some countries as Ireland in Europe and Nigeria in Africa.

Irish novel shares its genesis with the English novel. When we write of the eighteenth century and use the phrase ' the Irish novel', we are necessarily referring to novel written by authors who, irrespective of birthplace, inhabited both England and Ireland and who thought of themselves as English or possibly both English and Irish. This fact is apparent within hands when we talk about the Anglo-Irish novelist Elizabeth Bowen and her novels that show the obvious effect of her Irish identity upon her works during the period of World Wars I and II with a consideration to Ireland as a British colony. The same impact with African culture, postcolonial Nigeria, when its writers saw the changes crept to their traditions. Their literary products concentrated on questioning their nation how to keep and reserve African identity from alternations. Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian writer tried to reflect his culture in a mirror to readers and challenge them with their own strength and weakness in his novel Arrow of God. His novel tackles these weaknesses of the traditional outlook and senses for change.

The research paper tackles the concept of rootlessness in postcolonialism through Anglo-Irish novel The Death of the Heart (1938) of Elizabeth Bowen ,which is tackled in the first section , and postcolonial Nigerian novel Arrow of God (1964) written by Chinua Achebe in the second section. The paper ends with conclusions and works cited.

Key words: Social Alienation, Minority Cultures, Heroic Grandeur.

 http://dx.doi.org/10.47832/2791-9323.1-1.4

[1]  Prof. Dr. , Diyala University, Iraq, lumahh50@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1729-2586

Introduction

Postcolonial literature represents one of the most prolific genre in writing literary pieces that tackle themes such as identity, freedom, self-recognition, superiority, and minority. Many writers of countries were/ are under colonialism search deeply in the depth of such topics to portray how people suffered being oppressed and victimized by other strong countries that look more powerful and superior. Mostly, the theme of identity was leveled up among other themes because its believers in it made great differences to change the usual thought of powerless nations under the military strength of other nations. In this sense, African-American writers as well as Irish writers found in fiction a proper tool to narrate stories related mostly to real events, or they might be bios of the novelists themselves who made from their suffering a challenging way to prove the skillful identities in writing and experiencing life. Metaphorically, they uses symbols, characters, and settings to criticize the faked ideologies that came to impose development and democracy proving that colonialism cannot walk hand in hand with freedom. Economic, social, and political factors played an important role to imbalance the scales of human rights and justice and to impose on powerless nations elements like fear and violence.

Section I : The Death of the Heart as Bowen's Insight into the threatened Innocence .

In an increasingly multinational and multicultural world concerns of effect of colonialism and postcolonialism upon people. Writers produce literary works which direct reader's attention to matters as leaving roots and homelands to live elsewhere, or to live under the changes of colonialism and the struggle to reserve native's identity from being another copy of colonizer's.

The major kinds of writing in the twentieth century deal with the problems and issues of difference and culture; postcolonial literature. Writers and novelists in particular argue against the consequence of changes upon their people happened to their cultures by colonizers who aim to immerse colonized in the imported culture, denying the latter origins and traditions in an attempt to become more English than the English.

Most of colonized cultures agree that their identities are subject to be threatened and they are made to feel they do not belong anywhere. They assert that though they differ in color, education, or traditions, but they have one common line as colonized or postcolonized cultures that struggle to resurrect their identity by a constant resistance against colonizer's power.

Postcolonial literature seems to label literature written by people living in countries formerly colonized by other colonial powers as Britain, France, and Spain. The term refers also to "a post-modern intellectual discourse that holds together a set of theories found among the texts and sub-texts of philosophy, film, political science and literature" (Aschcroft, 1989, pp1-2).

Independence of thought and action from imported cultural traditions can seen as one of the themes of texts appeared in postcolonial period. This was empowered in so many ways through focusing on the language used in text aiming at making a relation between the experience of the place and the language that used to describe the postcolonial texts.

Actually, postcolonial writers tackle subjects of social alienation as master/slave, free/ bonded, ruler/ruled. On the other hand, they keep asking their people how to direct their attention towards being anti-colonial heroes emphasizing on the historical reconstruction of their nations.

It should be acknowledged that the use of postcolonialism refers to the racial formations of the former imperial powers of Europe, the settler societies of the United States, Canada, Australia, and the ex-colonial countries of Asia and Africa. Postcolonialism as a term is used by some writers as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha to refer to the nations that experienced colonizing and described as “other”. For instance, to Spivak, postcolonial nations that belong economically, socially, and politically to European empire are Europe’s other.

Postcolonial product highlights issues as inequalities of power and privilege within and among nations, regions, classes and genders. Moreover, it concentrates on getting new kinds of experience in a world and time that innocence has no place to live (Zeleza, 2006, 92).

Ireland was for centuries under the shadow of English scope. It experienced being anticolonial state struggled war of liberation and cultural identity from centuries of colonialist impositions, and lived bitter intellectual conflict that debates about colonialism, culture and anticolonial nationalism, and postcolonialism. On the other hand, though the British-Irish relationship was a colonial one, yet Irish literature witnessed a concrete development by its modern writers. They attempted to trace the ways in which the influence of colonialism and postcolonialism has been affected Irish literary products. They mostly dealt with issues as war and its consequences upon people who are colonized in their country or homeless wondering from one place to another. Irish cultural and literary history has become a major site for the elaboration of ideas about colonialism and postcolonialism. Paul Muldoon who wrote about postcolonial studies and Ireland: From Politics to Culture and Back Again, 1986, asserts that Irish proponents are mainly associated with the political left, and include many of the most influential , innovative cultural and intellectual figures in modern Ireland. A growing number of monographs have studied some major Irish writers in the light of postcolonial theory, or denounced the anti-Irish racism and colonialism of major figures in the English canon like Milton and Spenser. Simultaneously, there is much concentration on studying Ireland into wider arguments about imperialism and decolonialism by internationally collaborated cultural theorists like Edward Said, Fredric Jameson, and Terry Eagleton.

Recently, and encouraged by widespread contemporary academic interest in minority cultures, national beginnings, ethnic identities, minor literatures and anti and post-colonialism, critics of Irish literature have made fascinating raids on the vast corpus of English literature and sought to unpick the English-Irish interrelations (Foster,2009). For instance, Castle Rackrent: An Hibernian Tale (1800) had traditionally been read by English critics as a pioneering regional British novel but later Irish critics retrieved it as a pioneering national work, indeed the first truly Irish novel. Contemporary critics have tended to consider t with the universe of colonial discourse.

In fact, Irish novel is distinguished by the atmosphere of struggling against occupation and the constant resistance of getting liberation which all differ from English novel which the latter includes picaresque novel, satire, travel narratives, biography, history, moral tracts and romance. On the other hand, Irish political atmosphere could not be away from literary unit in which writers wrote about post independence Ireland that deals mainly with the housing development and reconstruction of Dublin particularly in the immediate aftermath of the War of Independence in 1922 (Kincaid,2006,69).

Many Irish and Anglo-Irish novelists were influenced by the effect of wars that happened nationally and internationally i.e., of their country as a colony to British Empire and then to the Civil War in Ireland, and the World War I and II. However, most of them highlighted how wars and their consequences bring changes and destruction to people who experiences being victims during and after war and colonialism. Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973) as an Anglo-Irish novelist and short story writer describes in her fiction the social realism of the last days of Anglo-Irish political and social

dominance in Ireland. She is described as a subtle, perceptive, wittily observer of the upper middle class. She often explores the predicament of sensitive individuals in conflict with their environment.
Bowen’s fundamental theme is the theme of innocence and experience which she consciously or unconsciously tackled out of wars and struggle of Irish people in particular and people who lived conditions of war and loss in general. Most of Bowen’s writings are directed to show the disjunction between her family history and her fictive representations of the landscape of North Cork. At the same time, there is much concentration on Bowen’s imagination of the hostile landscape around her home in North Cork and the murderous intent of these Irish fields and hills. Nowhere is Bowen’s acute sense of alone house set in a brooding landscape more strikingly represented than in her 1929 novel of the Irish War of Independence, The Last September in which Bowen idealized her Anglo-Irish protagonists for their courage in the face of imminent extinction in the hands of the emergent Irish revolutionaries (Walshe, 2005, 141). Being an Anglo-Irish woman does not prevent her to write about English society and its upper class and how Irish people are suffering losing their home and being nowhere though they are in their country. She wrote a flood of writings about Ireland as well as Court and Seven Winters in 1942, and stories like The Happy Autumn Fields (1945). In all of these Irish writings Bowen looked homewards to North Cork as a place of stability and loyalty in an endangered and treacherous world and her vision of Anglo-Ireland becomes her talisman, her source for imaginative power and stability in war-disordered London (Ibid). Bowen’s most ambitious wartime writing on Ireland is about the threat of violence that shaped the unsecured people during and after war and how people show loyalty to their land though they lost a lot and lived homelessly. This is clearly shown in Bowen’s The Happy Autumn Fields as a war time writing on Ireland in which it centers on the hallucinations of the protagonist, Mary, slumbering in a damaged house in war-torn London.
Bowen’s The Death of the Heart (1938) is a social satire in which she sharply criticized the English upper class and its extreme emotional control which resulted in soullessness. It portrays the dehumanized of modern English society.
As a part of war consequences, Bowen highlights the conflict between innocence and experience that often takes the form of the destruction of youthful innocence by the sophisticated adult world. She tries to come to grips with the loss of moral values and the sense of menace which pervaded the anti-war period. But unlike many of her contemporaries, she does not tackle any specific political ideology, yet she writes with humor and clear-sighted observation of the deceptions of society.
Bowen tends to imply the destructive influences of war and occupation indirectly in her works as a general message that does not concern only with Irish conditions and life, but rather common circumstances of people who suffer homelessness. The Death of the Heart is not only a crushing portray of the destruction of innocence, but a disillusioned warning that in the modern world innocence must be lost. This novel brought sweeping changes to the social orders in society which was subject to deep involvement in war and colonization. But Bowen turned to portray these changes in the form of love and human senses rather than the sense of political resistance and direct war threats. Bowen’s master stroke is in having two heroines. She combines the story that concerned her in the first group of novels, of first love, with her more recent narrative interest. The younger heroine becomes in this way a correlative for the earlier years of the older one. Actually, the central impact of the story derives less from the outcome of the first love or the confrontation with debilitation memories than from the dynamic relationships of the two women (Austine, 1989, 31).

Critics have responded to The Death of the Heart primarily in two ways: by discussing the implications of the author's childhood experiences i.e. the motherless outsider in the novel; and by examining the conflict between innocence and experience. Richard Tillinghast notes in "The House, the Hotel, and the Child" that the Anglo-Irish was always, from the sixteenth century on, to some degree rootless and insecure in the country they governed. This tension id due to the fact that the Protestant ruling class owned land taken by force from the Irish Catholic population by their ancestors (Answer.com). Such a fact has been extended to Bowen's characters in which the attenuation and malaise are clearly seen among them. Moreover, Bowen's relatives are strangers in a country where the Irish, in the early part of the twentieth century, are increasingly focused on struggle for Irish national independence from Britain (Ibid). This link between Bowen's own sense of cultural rootlessness and her most prominent character, the outsider, is echoed when she is detached by birth from the society she described. Bowen depicts Portia, the protagonist, as a young woman without a country, travelling throughout Europe as a vagabond, expelled from England by no fault of her own. She has to watch carefully the behavior of Englanders around her the moment she arrives London. Bowen links her status with Portia's in which the former points out the idea of rootlessness not only in the political sense, but also in social and psychological atmosphere when Bowen lost her father to mental illness when she was about six years old and her mother to cancer when she was thirteen. Bowen could not escape from the condition of motherless girl who lacks any guiding adult hands described as a dislocated child in an urgent seeking an identity as a means of survival. She understands the strong relationship between innocence and experience in a world that provides lessons to the inhabitants as man's primary need for an illusion and the eventual loss of innocence, the acquisition of knowledge through loss, and the entrance into selfhood. Thus, Portia's story is one of trying to understand who and what she is , taking on and shedding illusions, such as the illusion of love with Eddie, and moving from one stage of her life to another. Portia as an orphaned love child in a childless household, is an outsider banned to the continent by her father's first wife, doomed to wander from cheap hotel to cheaper. Portia's presence to the couple of Anna and Thomas Quayne as the daughter of Thomas's father and his mistress is the entrance into Quayne's house as the consummate outsider.

Portia is a keen observer, always on the lookout for clues as to what is the right thing to say and do. Often, she is confused about her position in the Quayne household and is overly deferential in her struggle to know what correct behavior is. For instance, when Anna and St. Quentin arrive for tea, Portia behaves almost as though she is the maid, offering to take coats and put away hats. She is desperate to find a place for herself in this new world. She finds herself stranger even to the language people speak in London. All atmospheres seem foreign to Portia even though she lives with her half-brother. Her living with relevant does not mean that she is a part of the new family because offering normal familial attention and love to Portia is simply beyond the capabilities of Anna and Thomas.

Portia and the adults around her seem to be from two different countries. She has seen little of the world while the Quaynes and their friends have lived through World War I, which left millions dead and changed how people thought about society and humanity altogether. Anna does not quite know how to treat Portia, so she enforces her opinions and choices on Portia without much consultation.

Portia is struggling to grow up but without much guidance from most of the adults around her. Lacking this guidance, she falls for Eddie venturing her innocence with the person who pays her any attention. Even though he is twenty-three who is barely an adult himself. He is self-centered and moody, but Portia so desperately wants to please somebody that she ignores this and sees only that Eddie seems to be misunderstood. This bonds them and fulfills her immature image of what love

should be-a relationship that creates an exclusive world of fantasy, away from the realities of the day-to-day. As well, Portia survives to resurrect and develop her own sense of who she is. She is afraid being lost in a world that does not belong to her real identity. She feels the pressure to become an adult even as she struggles to find her place as an adolescent.

Actually, The Death of the Heart tells how innocence lives with wickedness in which the former is subject to the world's betrayal of others. Portia discovers that the world's discomfiture comes out of cheat when people loss everything in a sophisticated and corrupted world. She thinks that innocent are so few that two of them seldom meet and when they do meet they became victims of society. Eddie, as the embittered young writer, despite his unpleasantness, he is similar to Portia for they are both outcasts. Bowen periodically breaks off the narrative to address the reader directly concerning Portia and Eddie:

> Innocence so constantly finds itself in a
> false position that inwardly innocent people
> learn to be disingenuous. Lacking a proper
> language of their own, they are imperfectly
> translated; they exist alone and compromise
> falsifying through their desire to impart and
> to feel warmth.
>
> (quoted in Rubens,1996
> The Death of the Heart)

To Eddie, Portia's innocence is a last oasis in the world wasteland. But he plays her false with another girl, compromises her with everybody, and ironically completes his betrayal when he refuses her love, saying she has the same ulterior motives as everybody else. Portia's betrayal is climaxed when she discovers that her diary has been discovered and talked about by Anna. Discovering and reading Portia's diary means the betrayal of the 16 years old child's innocence and the breaking down of heart that doomed to nowhere:

> "Fancy her watching me! St. Quentin exclaims.
> "What a little monster she must be. And she
> looks so aloof". Anna responds: "She does not
> seem to think you are a snake in the grass, though
> she sees a good deal of grass for a snake to be in.
> There does not seem to be a single thing that she
> misses.
>
> (quoted in Tillinghast,1994
> The Death of the Heart)

As a response to Eddie's betrayal and disoriented by Anna's rejection of her, Portia takes the extraordinary step of going to the Major who is trying to find his way in the fast-changing Britain of the thirties. After she has told the Major how unhappy she is with her brother and sister-in-law, he asks Portia quietly what she wants to do:

> Stay here with you, she said. "You do like me",
> "You write to me; you send me puzzles. You say

> you think about me…I could do things for you:
> we could have a home; we would not have to live
> in a hotel…I could cook; my mother cooked when
> she lived in Notting Hill Gate. Why could you not
> marry me? I could cheer you up. I would not get
> in your way, and we should not be half so lonely"
> (Ibid)

The frequent scene of betrayal to Portia struck her realization that most of the adults in her life have been viciously criticizing her. She finds herself at a hotel. Even though she is frightened and upset, looking like "a wild creature just old enough to know that it must dread humans". With her heart broken and her innocence shed, Portia speaks openly, unlike she has ever spoken before in London, about Anna and Eddie and all the others who have disappointed her. She has been wounded by her fantasies of love. She finds a rest and feels safe when she runs to the hotel in which houses seem to hold a special dread for her as if they represent the crassness of the world in conflict with her innocence and inexperience.

Portia feels tension in houses that do not match to her comfort. She observes that Thomas and Anna's relationship is tense and that tension is everywhere in their house on Windsor Terrace. The house is filled with a heavy silence, unlike the chatter and sounds of living Portia is accustomed to hearing through the walls of hotels. This is a home where she feels very much not at home. In her diary, Portia writes "when Thomas comes in he looks as though she smelled something he thought he might not be let eat. This house makes a smell of feeling" (Sanderson, 2002). And when she visits her brother in his library, she displays no sense of relief being with him. She offers to refill his cigarette case, as if she were his valet, and folds herself up in a chair, as if attempting to take up the smallest possible piece of real estate inside the house. But when Portia goes to stay with Mrs. Heccomb and her adult children at Seale-on-Sea, just after leaving Anna and Thomas's house in London, her entire demeanor changes, reflecting the relaxed, casual air that pervades the house named Waikiki (Ibid).

One of the most important aspects of the novel is the contrast of living that from people lives and behavior. For instance, Thomas and Anna are eminently settled in their house, their work, their society. But Portia's life has always been rootless, moving from one European hotel to another, staying out of season and in the cheapest rooms. Her rootlessness is relieved with one vital exception: the security of her parent's love. Furthermore, Eddie's rootlessness is of a more dangerous variety, coming of having rejecting the life of his still-living parents without creating anything significant of his own to replace it, but it takes Portia's time to realize the essential difference between them.

Actually, what had happened to Portia is her realization that innocence so constantly finds itself in a false position that inwardly innocent people learn to be disingenuous, strangers to the world. It is the corruption of innocence that Bowen inverts the formula to show the destructive power of innocence itself.

Section II : Arrow of God : Achebe's treatment of the lost Identity of the African People

In the last half of the twentieth century many postcolonial cultures have found themselves out of balance. During colonization, people lived in void of non-existence identity. To colonized people, everything is stolen from them, identity, tradition, beliefs, and religion. They feel the empty of

meaning and illusion in adopting western identity in which colonizer believes he has a serious burden of bringing civilization to the savage nature of colonized.

Writers of postcolonialism assert that the departure of the colonizing power forced the postcolonial world out of balance placing the formerly colonized nations into a new and continued version of dependence upon the West (Nesbitt, 2006, 117). As a reflection of the continuing colonization, many individuals do not communicate in their indigenous language and their schools do not teach and reflect their social and cultural situations for they have western instructors who try to enforce the western attitudes and beliefs among postcolonized. Even religion does not reflect their own indigenous religious history heading most people to convert to that of Whiteman's.

According to African writers, they assist the process of cultural and personal re-identification by playing the role of a communicator of the national struggle to the people. One of the major writer's tasks is the use of literature to describe the illusion, the void, the resistance, and the imbalance created. He helps his native people to define a new voice of resistance and assist each individual in his own private struggle to remove the illusory mask. On the other hand, the intellectual native must hold the responsibility of struggle through using a language native could understand especially those without money and power as the majority of the population.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, whose first novel were written in English, the colonizer's language, has long chosen to write in his native Gikuyu rather than English. According to Ngugi, although the Gikuyu may not have the money to buy his books, historically the Gikuyu people are of oral culture, but they could discuss his ideas in community gatherings. Thus, Ngugi accepts his role as a communicator and "an awakener of people" through this discussion:

> It was easy for people to write in the language
> of their colonization because it was the language
> of their conceptualization, the language of
> education, the language of which they attempt
> to intellectually grasp the world around them.
> I believe that the language issue is a very
> important key to the decolonization process.
> What is really happening now is that African
> Thought is imprisoned in foreign languages.
> (Interviews, 1992, 30)

So, it is possible to assume that African identity has been stolen. When the colonizers replace the native colonized language and when the system of education is replaced by that of a Western one, it surely weakens the colonized identity. When the writer communicates to the people in their native language, he is making a decision to communicate to the majority of the people in a language they can trust and understand. Furthermore, the development of a new language creates new identity; it does not resurrect an old one. People's struggle is where the new identity is born:

> We believe that the conscious and organized
> undertaking by a colonized people to re-establish
> the sovereignty of that nation constitutes the most
> complete and obvious cultural manifestation that
> exists…The struggle for freedom does not give

> back to the national culture its former value and shapes; this struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men cannot leave intact either the form or the content of the people's culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man.
>
> (Fanon, 1963, pp.246-6)

On the other hand, indigenous writers righty remain wary of other implications of the post-colonial. For they see themselves as still colonized, always invaded and never free of a history of white occupation.

When we look at the postcolonial writers, we notice that they headed their works in the form of a cultural clash in hybridity having their own traditional background and new colonialist morals forced on them. Another feature it can be mentioned here is the cultural metamorphoses in society reflected in texts as the transplantation of names and mixing of languages that show how people respond to changes in a diverse way.

Though Irish literature shares with African literary works in some of points and themes related to colonialism and postcolonialism. Among of those points are postcolonial texts in which they are written in various Englishes and located entirely within English studies. While themes highlight resistance, struggle for the resurrection of native identity, and reserving the traditional values. African postcolonial writers carried the effects of colonial era much more than Irish for the former are used to be known as Third world postcolonial literature of savage people who are in urgent need to Whiteman to bring modernity and change their undeveloped manners of life.

One of the important sources of African images is Chinua Achebe's powerful reflection of African mirror. As an African writer, he often makes creative use of the history of the continent in his effort to understand and share with his readers the great pains and sometimes joys, of living in Africa and knowing its historical traditions. It was so important to Achebe to reflect the history of Africa in his novels and essays to celebrate the heroic grandeur of the African strong-rooted traditions and to awaken its people to face challenges that threaten their identity. In fact, Achebe does not only concentrate on Africa under the colonial invasion only, but also he refers to some peaceful and friendly relations related to the significant elements of cultures. In addition, the conversion to another religion in Achebe's novels show the advantages of Christianity when Igbo people left their religious traditions to follow the religion of the colonizer.

In Achebe's Arrow of God (1964), one could find different gods and humans, different social groups, different language practices, and different religions, all struggles for space and dominance. There is a true debate and conversation that take into account the need for the kind of social changes that are shaped by internal and external conflicts.

This novel focuses on how the internal conflicts personal and communal, can play into the hands of more powerful external forces. Arrow of God focuses on Nigeria's early experiences with colonialism, from first contact with the British to widespread British administration. It starts after World War I, a time when the British ruled much of the world and impose their cultural values on the primitive cultures which they found. Perhaps the important point in this novel is that when people neglect the need of certain kinds of changes from within, these changes will be enforced upon them from outside, but that should not wipe out the entire history and culture of such people or turn them into inferior human beings whose lives should be controlled and run by the outside forces (Anyadike,2004).

In the Arrow of God, the emphasis is placed on politics and government as well as religion, and Ezeulu , the central figure in the novel, is more of an intellectual, giving deep thought to events and ready to be flexible to accommodate change and the unexpected (Ibid). He is the core of the story more than the society he belongs to. He and his culture are one. There exists a genuine struggle between Ezeulu and his rivals in his own tribe, the British administrators and Christian missionaries. He is in a conflict with himself though he is subject always to the external forces brought to bear upon his life.

The novel opens with Ezeulu brooding over his eyesight “and that someday he would have to rely on someone else’s eyes as his grandfather had done when his sight failed”(Achebe, 1964,1). Actually, this seen reflects Ezeulu’s internal conflict. The allusion here is that this impending blindness is a threat, for it will interfere with his ordering of religious festivals, and will even mean that his tribal influence will cease to be felt among his people if he fails to observe the progression of the moon (Mordaunt, 1989). He thinks that if the responsibility of his religious guidance will be challenged by blindness, his political influence will be in danger. He finds himself fit to this responsibility as any young man or even better which this indicated that he likes to act his authority over his tribe as he thinks of himself of more responsible and aware. Despite his great confidence of himself as a powerful man, he depends on those supernatural forces. Even the choice of his successor is in the power of Ulu; therefore, dependence of the deity is a threat to his authority. His power as an authoritative man is stronger only when he co-operates with the supernatural powers. He writes in anguish over his authority, haunted by fear that his power is in danger of being challenged. He wields immense power over the year, the crops, and over the people, but “he named the day” and did not “choose” it, except for the feast of the pumpkin Leaves and for the New Yam feast. He regards himself merely as a “watchman” (Ibid). He convinces himself that no one in Umuaro can face him and tell him that he, Ezeulu, “dare not”. He could not give up the quest for solving his problem of authority. He has assessed his situation in light of influences and changes brought to bear on his society. He is intrigued by the power of the white man; particularly the latter’s use of the firearm to quell the civil war between Umuaro and Okperi.

Ezeulu’s desire is to survive his power and authority through many ways (Scafe, 2002). His decision to send his son Oduche to white man’s region “join these people and be my eye there”, has two advantages; first as a way of managing the changes that threaten his authority, precipitate the decline of Umuaro and his power over the villages “with great power and conquest, it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his own deity…but he also wanted to learn white man’s wisdom…” (AoG, 1964, 47). Second, sending his son to the mission school is in fact for personal gain, not for the good of the society for which he is a part. He wants that deep-seated chance to compensate what he lacks: power.

Apparently, Ezeulu has mixed feelings. He sends Oduche to the missionaries in order to gain access to their wisdom, but he fears the aggressiveness of the new religion. However, his devotion to his god, Ulu, is unquestionable. He is sincere when he refuses to obey Winterbottom’s summons to Okperi because such a behavior does not befit his sacred role. Ezeulu stands up for what he believes is right, as his god reveals it to him.

As the story proceeds, Ezeulu feels more and more alienation from his community. They do not support him, and they do not even admit that he was right when they get bad effects from their headstrong actions. They even go against his advice asserting their right situation towards him.

People of the clan show indifference when Ezeulu claims a special vision for himself and talks about sacrificing Oduche to the white man. Ezeulu thinks that he knows the truth about the land, but he knows only the facts. His fear became real when the white men give the land to Okperi, and the white men have guns and soldiers.

Ezeulu's son Obika walks through the night, singing and speaking. But Ezeulu hopes that such singing is better to be devoted to god and against Christian missionaries. He thinks theat the culture of his people dies all around him because of the white man's power. Those simple people of his land cannot stand up against colonizers and their guns, and people are doomed to the Christian missionaries and the power of the outsiders.

Ezeulu's pride has been faced with destruction not only to himself and the people, but also to their religion and culture. The song of extermination which he referred to earlier in the novel has been fulfilled:6

> "It is saying: Leave your Yam, leave your
> cocoyam and come to church. That is what
> Udoche says". "Yes", said Ezeulu thoughtfully
> "It tells them to leave their yam and their
> Cocoyam, does it? That it is the song of
> extermination". (Ibid)

Arrow of God represents the conflict between religions or the clash between two forms of government. It shows also the conflict between Ezeulu's religious power and the earthly powers of society represented by its members. Furthermore, there is the internal religious conflict within Ezeulu himself. On the other hand, there is a conflict within the colonial camp. The white administrator Winterbottom is constantly frustrated by the colonial administration that pretends to know more about the situation. His hands and feet are bounded by his administration that led him to imprison Ezeulu which in turn created a religious problem: the naming of the Yam festival. Ezeulu's conflict with the administrative government comes when the former refused to represent his people and act as a spokesman for his people, thus the administration refuses to accept that is no centralized power within the Igbo community.

Ezeulu's downfall is disastrous not only for the people but for tradional religion because the hungry people dedicate their crop to the Christian God. He lost a lot since his son is dead and he must bury him. Actually, he has nothing left, not even a young man to look at the stars for him when he is old and blind.

Conclusions

Postcolonialism is used to signify a position against imperialism. It encourages writers and novelists as well to glorify their traditions and glories of their background even with the existence of colonizer. Most of those writers head their products to the themes of resistance and resurrection of the colonized identity through literary works.

Ireland and African nation as Nigeria and Kenya experienced being colonized and postcolonized suffered the economical, political and cultural invasion of European power. In a way or another, writers of these countries did their best to awaken their native people to realize clearly and dangerously the threat of being slaves to the colonizer's civilization. Ireland and England, house and hotel, innocence and experience, the child and the world-these are the boundaries between which Elizabeth Bowen's fiction runs its supple and sinuous course. Her The Death of the Heart is not only a crushing portrayal of the destruction of innocence, but a disillusioned warning that in the modern

world, innocence must be lost. She reveals her potent form of disabused romanticism and her distaste for the dehumanization of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, African literature shows its disciplined resistance through intellectual figures who took the responsibility of reminding their nation of the serious danger that circles their traditions. Arrow of God by Chinua Achebe presents some cultural dynamic problems, such as religious conflicts, disunity, and war among villages of the Igbo nation. It shows the colonial impact and cultural conflict against the British imperial rule. The novel illustrates themes like foreign cultural conflicts, western influences on African cultural traditions, patience, and religious contradictions. Cultural conflict includes the colonial impact and its effects upon all aspects of Igbo and African life.

Resources

Achebe, Chinua (1964) ,(ed.1980). Arrow of God. London: Heineman.
Answer. Com. The Death of the Heart (Critical Overview). Retrieved on 15th, Feb., 2010 from
www.AuthorHouse.co.uk
Anyadike, Chima (2004) .One Against the Others: Conflict of Histories In Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. N Y: Ithaca, Cornell University. African Studies and Research Center.
Aschcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffen (1989). The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature.
London and New York: Routledge.
Austine, Allan E. (1989). Elizabeth Bowen. Boston:Twayne Publishers.
Fanon, Fritz (1963) "On National Culture". The Wretched of the Earth.
New York: Grove, pp. 206-48.
Foster, John Wilson (2009). The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel. London: University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
Interviews with Writers of the Post-Colonial World (1992).Ed.Feroza Jussawalla and Read Way Dasenbrock. Jackson:Up of Mississippi,pp. 25-41.
Kincaid, Andrew (2006). Postcolonial Dublin: Imperial Legacies and the Built Environment. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Mordaunt, Owen G.(1989) Conflict and its Manifestations in Achebe's Arrow of God. Afrika Focus, Vol.5, Nr.3-4, pp. 153-165.
Nesbitt, Laura (2006). Creating Identity out of the Postcolonial Void.
Journal of African Literature and Culture. University of New Mexico.
Rubens , Robert (1996). Elizabeth Bowen: A Woman of Wisdom.
Contemporary Review Company Ltd. Michigan: Farmington Hill.
Sanderson, Susan (2002). Critical Essays on The Death of the Heart,in Novels for Students. The Gale Group. Retrieved on 15th, Feb.,2010 from
WWW.VidaTech.co.uk
Scafe, Suzanne (2002). Wherever Something Stands, Something Else Will Stand Beside it: Ambivalence in Achebe's Things Fall A Part and Arrow of God. Carfax Publishing: Taylor and Francis Group.
Changing English, Vol. 9, No. 2.

Tillinghast, Richard (1994). Elizabeth Bowen : The House, the Hotel, and the Child. The New Criterion Vol. 13, No. 4. Retrieved on 15th, Feb., 2010 from http://www.newcriterion.com

Walshe, Eibhear (2005). Several Landscapes: Bowen and the Terrain of North Cork. London: University College Cork.

Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe (2006). The Troubled Encounter Between Postcolonialism and African History. Journal of the Canadian

Historical Association, Vol. 17, pp. 89-129. Retrieved on 11th, Feb.2010 from http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/016592ar